



HANDOUTS AND SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

for the Washington DC Summer Youth Employment Program workshop:

MAKING YOUNG PEOPLE'S SUMMER EXPERIENCES PRODUCTIVE, MEANINGFUL, AND VALUABLE:

Engaging Youth Through Work, Learning, and Youth Development

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A SUMMARY OF THE SCANS SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

What Workers Need to Survive and Thrive in a High-Performance Workplace

From "What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report For America 2000",
Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, US Department of Labor, 1992

BASIC SKILLS:

Reads and writes competently
Uses basic arithmetic and math competently
Listens effectively
Speaks clearly

THINKING:

Thinks creatively
Makes well-thought-out decisions
Solves problems
Visions -- "Sees things in the mind's eye"
Knows how to learn
Reasons

PERSONAL QUALITIES:

Demonstrates responsibility
Possesses self-esteem
Demonstrates social skills
Manages him/herself
Demonstrates integrity/honesty

RESOURCES:

Allocates time
Allocates money
Allocates material and facility resources
Allocates human resources

INFORMATION:

Acquires and evaluates information
Organizes and maintains information
Interprets and communicates information
Uses computers to process information

INTERPERSONAL:

Participates as a member of a team
Teaches others
Serves clients/customers
Exercises leadership
Negotiates to arrive at a decision
Works with cultural diversity

SYSTEMS:

Understands systems
Monitors and corrects performance
Improves and designs systems

TECHNOLOGY:

Selects technology
Applies technology to task
Maintains and troubleshoots technology

WHAT MIGHT YOUNG PEOPLE LEARN THROUGH HIGH QUALITY SUMMER WORK EXPERIENCES?

- **WORK READINESS SKILLS**

Essential actions and behaviors needed to work within any work organization

- **SCANS SKILLS**

Transferable skills and competencies needed in any job that pays a living wage

- **BASIC SKILLS**

Capacity to read, write, and do the arithmetic and mathematics needed in the workplace

- **SPECIFIC TECHNICAL/OCCUPATIONAL/VOCATIONAL SKILLS**

Skills and practices necessary to function in a particular job

- **LEADERSHIP SKILLS**

Actions and behaviors of a person who can lead others toward an important goal

- **SOCIAL SKILLS**

Actions and behaviors needed to function well among people and society in general, and across cultures

- **COMMUNITY SERVICE VALUES**

Core beliefs that “giving back to the community” is important, and actions that reflect this

- **INFORMATION ABOUT JOBS, OCCUPATIONS, CAREERS**

Essential information about options in the labor market that enables youth to make intelligent choices

- **THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION**

Understanding and appreciation of how what one learns in school is crucial to survival and success in the workplace – be it middle school, high school, and/or post-secondary education or training.

- **ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE**

Understanding of subjects taught in school

- **ACADEMIC CONTEXT AND APPLICATION**

Ability to apply academic subjects in the workplace and in life

- **THE INTEGRATION OF WORK AND LEARNING**

Capacity to connect all of the above

SUPERVISORS SHOULD HAVE YOUNG PEOPLE REFLECT

WHAT IS "REFLECTION"?

Reflection means "pondering" or "actively considering".

Reflection is a formal process of
thinking seriously about and contemplating
a subject, issue, process, and/or problem.

For strong learning and retention to occur
as the summer progresses,
reflection is a **crucial** activity.

As youth do their jobs, they **regularly** need to
think about and verbalize
what they are learning through the doing.

The role of reflection is to translate things that may be done
unconsciously into consciousness and verbalization.

Regular reflection will contribute to
young people becoming better workers.

THE NEED FOR REGULAR REFLECTION TIME

*JUST BECAUSE A YOUTH
USES A SKILL
DOESN'T MEAN THAT
S/HE WILL **RECOGNIZE** WHAT SKILL
S/HE IS USING.*

**LEARNERS NEED TIME SET ASIDE REGULARLY
TO REFLECT ABOUT AND LABEL
THE SKILLS THEY ARE USING.**

*JUST BECAUSE A YOUTH
CAN **LABEL** THE SKILLS S/HE IS USING
DOESN'T MEAN THAT S/HE WILL KNOW HOW TO
USE THOSE SKILLS **WELL** OR **EFFICIENTLY**.*

**LEARNERS NEED TO SPEND TIME CONSIDERING
"BEST PRACTICES"
FOR USE OF THOSE SKILLS...
ANALYZING WHAT ACTIONS OR BEHAVIORS
WERE THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS
TO USE THOSE SKILLS.**

*JUST BECAUSE A YOUTH **USES** A SKILL
DOESN'T MEAN THAT
S/HE RECOGNIZES WHERE ELSE
THAT SKILL MIGHT BE USED.*

**LEARNERS NEED TO USE SKILLS
IN A VARIETY OF CONTEXTS
AND TO REFLECT ABOUT
"SKILLS TRANSFERABILITY"...
WHERE ELSE EACH SKILL
MIGHT BE USED.**

OTHER COMMON REFLECTION PROCESSES

Depending upon the nature of the work young people are doing at their summer worksites, supervisors might consider additional opportunities to help youth reflect about concepts such as those listed below.

AS YOUNG PEOPLE CARRY OUT THEIR SUMMER JOB TASKS,
THEY MIGHT ALSO CONSIDER
HOW EACH SKILL INVOLVED IN THOSE TASKS
RELATES TO:

- the community service project they are working on;
- academic subjects they have studied or should study;
- basic academic skills they have developed or should develop;
- interpersonal skills they will need;
- occupational skills needed in the labor market;
- transferable / marketable skills that cross occupations;
- other occupations that require the skills they are using and learning;
- areas in which further post-secondary education or training would be desirable or necessary;
- their feelings about what they are doing.

Note: Reflection is most effective when done while the learning experience is still fresh. This means during the experience, immediately after it, or by the end of the workday during which it occurred.

REFLECTION: MAKING LEARNING OVERT

A DETAILED “HOW TO DO IT” DESCRIPTION FOR SUMMER WORKSITE SUPERVISORS

*Adults who oversee young people
during the
Summer Youth Employment Program
should regularly have young people
REFLECT about what they are doing and learning.*

The *Summer Youth Employment Program* is not just about jobs and paychecks. It's also very much about **learning**. And this learning will produce better workers for those who supervise them.

As young people embark upon their work experiences, they should be made aware of **what they will be expected to learn** throughout the summer. Let them know what they will be learning. This advance announcement of **learning intent** arms them with antennae for subsequent learning and evaluation.

In turn and throughout their summer program experiences, young people should regularly spend time in formal activities, guided by adults, that call upon them to "reflect" about what they are doing and learning.

REFLECT, REFLECT, AND REFLECT AGAIN!

WHAT IS "REFLECTION"?

For strong learning and retention to occur as the summer progresses, reflection is a crucial activity.

As youth do their jobs, they regularly need to think about and verbalize what they are learning through the doing.

Reflection means "pondering" or "actively considering". It is a formal process of thinking seriously about and contemplating some subject, issue, process, and/or problem. The role of reflection is to translate things that may be done unconsciously into consciousness and verbalization.

IN DETAIL, WHAT MIGHT YOUNG PEOPLE REFLECT ABOUT?

When young people are called upon to reflect regularly, their learning improves significantly. Their reflection processes may need to consider several arenas:

- Most youth will lack a skills-oriented vocabulary. Although most might recognize that carpentry or auto mechanics are skills, few may recognize that many of "soft" skills (SCANS skills and competencies, etc.) are very important marketable skills. Youth need to be made aware of the importance and value of the SCANS and other lesser-known skills, and given opportunities to use and verbalize them.

- A youth may use a skill, but be unaware that s/he is using it. When focused on a complex task or activity, people tend to pay more attention to the work being done (the "doing") than to the skills being used or to the learning that is taking place. Most tasks and activities require an integrated array of skills to implement and complete. Youth may use and demonstrate a set of skills while so focused, yet never realize that they were doing so. Each young person needs to regularly address the question, "What skills am I using to do my job?"
- A youth may use a skill but not understand **how** to use it correctly or well. Indeed, a "skill" is not one thing. Rather, a skill is a **collection** of behaviors and actions. Young people need to spend time picking each skill apart, and identifying those behaviors and actions that comprise the components of a well-executed skill. They also need to consider the issue of quality by asking, "What behaviors and actions contribute to effective use of this skill, and which hinder solid performance?"
- A young person might use school subjects -- academic or technical/vocational content -- in his/her job, but not recognize the school subjects s/he is applying. Young people should be asked regularly to state what they have learned about using their school subjects.
- Young people may use a skill or something they learned in school in one situation or context, yet not recognize where else that skill or that content can be applied. Youth need to spend time considering a variety of other situations in which each skill or content area might also be used: in their lives and in various jobs. In addition, a youth may use a skill or content in a group setting, but may not recognize that this same process could be used individually (For example, brainstorming multiple possible answers to an issue is a process that can be done in groups or alone).
- Although young people may do something, they may not recognize the **value** of what they are doing. They may need to reflect about "why?" Their answers may be intrinsic, external, personal, institutional, etc. When participants are involved in (community) service projects, "the why" is particularly important.

Time **must** be set aside **regularly** for participants to reflect -- to consider the **details** of what they are learning.

WHAT MIGHT PARTICIPANTS REFLECT ABOUT?

There are many concepts upon which reflection might focus. Among those especially important are:

What skills and school subjects are youth using and learning?

- What skills are individuals and groups using to perform their work tasks?
- What school subjects (academic, technical, and/or vocational) apply to their jobs and how?

How can we assure continuous quality improvement?

- Are we using and learning our skills well?
- What's working and what's not?
- What problems are youth facing, and why?
- What should youth keep doing? Why?
- What should youth change? How? Why?
- What might be done to improve performance and learning? How? When? By whom?

What is the "right way" to do what young people are doing ("best practices")?

- For each identified skill and/or school subject, what have young people learned about how to use it/them correctly and efficiently?
- What are the general practices for each skill and/or content area that might be considered "industry standard" (e.g., the behaviors or actions that businesses expect their own employees to demonstrate)?

In what situations beyond this summer job might each skill or knowledge content also be used?

- Where else in youths' lives might they use what they are learning and doing here?
- In what occupations/careers might these skills and knowledge areas be particularly important/valuable?

In summer community service and/or civic action projects, it may also be appropriate to have participants reflect about concepts such as:

- What might be young people's roles in serving their communities?
- How does it feel to do this service/action?

HOW MIGHT REFLECTION ACTIVITIES BE CONDUCTED?

There are many processes through which reflection might occur. The "how" is at the summer program supervisor's discretion.

When a worksite involves **one young person, or perhaps a very small number of youth**, reflection activities would be powerful if they occurred regularly in personal appointments between the work supervisor and an individual young person, and/or with the summer program counselor and the young person, or some combination.

If **groups of young people** are involved (such as worksites that use crews), supervisors and/or counselors might consider:

- full-group discussions where all youth focus on the same reflection topic.
- sub-group discussions where smaller teams of youth focus on the same topic simultaneously and then report out their conclusions to their full group.
- sub-group discussions where smaller teams of youth focus on different topics simultaneously and report out their conclusions to their full group.
- participation in an activity/experience that appears different from previous ones, yet uses the same skills, content, and/or concepts in a different context -- followed by a reflection discussion that compares what happened in the two activities/experiences.
- brainstorming sessions generating possible "best practices" for various skills.
- daily and other regular writing of group and/or personal reflection reports.
- daily and ongoing personal journal writing and/or completion of "daily reflection sheets."
- periodic private review and reflection about journal entries, coupled with group discussions of important revelations and thoughts.
- periodic public presentations.
- reflection "games" (e.g., altering common board-games such as "Sorry" or "Trivial Pursuit" so that youth must address reflection issues in order to advance along the board).
- individual meetings and discussions with the supervisor/ instructor and or other involved overseers.

CAN ONE SCHEDULE REGULAR REFLECTION TIME?

A key to successful reflection is that it should be done **while the learning experience is fresh** – conducted immediately before an activity, in the middle of the activity, or immediately after the activity.

If young people are working Monday through Friday, and the supervisor waits until Friday to have participants reflect back on the events of the week, it may be too late for the most effective reflection to take place. The reflection process will be minimally helpful because the details of learners' experiences on Monday through Thursday will have become foggy.

Perhaps **formal** times for reflection can be scheduled each day before, during, and after the "work"; AND can exploit periodic, **informal** reflection opportunities that randomly occur. For example:

- A summer project that involves participants from 8:30 a.m. through 4:00 p.m. incorporates several, formal reflection sessions daily:
 - When youth arrive in the morning, they spend 30 minutes formally discussing the work ahead of them for that day using reflections about what happened the previous day. They talk about problems to be addressed, try to solve those problems, assign work to various individuals, and choose an "academic or skills theme" to be considered during the day's work.
 - Then youth spend the rest of the morning implementing their work, as per their earlier discussions.
 - As the young people work, the supervisors look for informal "teachable moments". Periodically they intervene -- asking youth about what's happening, what's working or not working, what's being learned, etc.
 - At lunch time, youth formally talk about what's happened so far, and reflect about issues that surfaced during the morning.
 - After lunch, the work and informal reflection moments continue.
 - At 3:00 p.m., youth meet again to review their day. They discuss what was done, how it got done, using what skills, best practices, what else was learned, how it applied to their academic work, etc.
- Some summer work experiences call for reflection on the "spur of the moment". For example:
 - A work supervisor monitors what the young people under his/her charge are doing -- watching youth carefully from a distance. S/he has "antennae out" --looking for "teachable moments". S/he constantly is aware of situations that crop up through which the young people might learn something important.
 - When such "ad hoc" learning situations present themselves, s/he steps in with a "learning interruption". The supervisor stops what's happening, calls attention to the learning situation, and through facilitation draws out the learning that has occurred. These learning opportunities occur regularly. Hence, reflection and planning moments occur all the time, and represent a significant number of moments amidst total project hours.

HOW ARE REFLECTION AND EVALUATION CONNECTED?

A set of important follow-up steps in the reflection process is connected to situations in which young people identify a "best practice" associated with a particular skill:

- The action or behavior (practice) should be debated, and then confirmed as a "best practice" by the young people and their supervisor.
- The agreed-upon practice should be written down and formally posted for regular reference.
- Once posted, young people should view the practice as "the law".
- From then on, youth should be expected to regularly demonstrate this practice.
- Initially, young people may need to be held to performance of this best practice by their supervisor, but eventually they should police themselves.

This procedure assures that youth will regularly use and demonstrate best practices, thereby becoming competent in skills rather than just using skills in haphazard manners. Over time, these formal lists of best practices become observable behaviors and actions that can be used to evaluate each youth's competence within each skill area.

For example: If young people and their adult supervisor agree that a best practice within the "teamwork" skill area is, "There should be no put-downs of team members or their ideas", that concept should be posted and turned into a ground-rule. Youth should regularly ask, "How are we doing on this?" When a rule is broken, the offender should be confronted. As part of an assessment of whether youth function well as a team, the supervisor and the young people can use adherence to this best practice as one yardstick.

BEST PRACTICE CRITERIA

For Summer Youth Employment Programs

gleaned from youth development and summer program research and experience

MEANINGFUL WORK

It's more than just a paycheck.

"Meaningful" can take many forms.

Youth have learning-rich opportunities.

Worksites offer youth on-the job training, project-based learning, work-based learning, service learning, and/or other learning-rich experiences.

Youth explore jobs, occupations, and career pathways.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMPETENT, CARING ADULTS

Caring worksite supervisors and counselors serve in a positive, mentoring capacity.

Quality of the learning experience is dependent upon the commitment of the supervisor/mentor.

Supervisors support social skill as well as workforce and vocational skill development.

Supervisors give youth responsibility, a measure of autonomy, and regular feedback on performance.

Youth will rise to high expectations if those expectations are stated in a clear, caring manner and youth receive the support they need to deliver on those expectations.

Adults recognize that gains and learning will take place over time.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES IN PLACE FOR POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL SETTINGS

Young people and adults work together as partners.

Youth have opportunities to be engaged and serve as leaders.

Youth are viewed as competent resources to build and sustain just, safe, and healthy communities.

OPPORTUNITY TO COMBINE WORK & LEARNING AND ACQUIRE MARKETABLE SKILLS

Youth learn, apply and improve Work Readiness skills (such as attendance, punctuality, work expectations, and problem-solving).

Youth learn, apply and improve an array of the SCANS skills and competencies.

Youth learn, apply and improve an array of other skills and knowledge.

Youth connect school subjects to work and life.

Youth regularly reflect about what they are doing and learning.

AGE AND STAGE APPROPRIATE PLACEMENTS AND TASKS

What 14 year olds want and need differ from what 20 year olds want and need.

Younger people and first-time workers especially need to focus on the basics of "how to work"/good work habits.

Investing in the transition to post-secondary education and credentials can lead to valuable outcomes for older youth.

SYSTEMS OF SUPPORTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Youth receive access to resources and services they want and/or need – during and beyond the summer program (These commonly include transportation, clothing, healthy food, case management, etc.).

THOUGHTS ABOUT YOUTH “MOTIVATION”

Guiding assumption and philosophy: One cannot usually motivate another person. However, one can create an environment in which another person is more likely to be motivated. There are a number of factors that contribute to a motivating environment. Consider:

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS:	DETAILS:
INCENTIVE	<u>What's in it for me?</u> I know what I want, and/or I strongly agree that what others want is right for me. Is the incentive strong? Can this incentive overcome other conflicting incentives?
EXPECTANCY	<u>Do I believe that I can do/achieve it?</u> I think that I can do it. If not; what's in the way? What will it take for me to believe that I can do it?
LOCUS OF CONTROL	<u>Who runs my life?</u> Internal Locus of Control: I'm generally in charge. I'm usually responsible for what happens in my life. My decisions typically lead to outcomes. External Locus of Control: Outside forces usually control me. I'm not responsible. "They" are responsible. I'm a victim. (These contribute to or detract from incentive and expectancy)
REGULAR WINS	<u>I regularly see progress.</u> When I work at something, I see ongoing, commensurate gains. This makes me want to keep working. (This contributes to expectancy.)
DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	<u>I tackle some tough challenges.</u> I feel proud when I succeed. (This contributes to incentive and expectancy.)
LEARNING FROM FAILURE	<u>I know that failing is a learning experience.</u> I do not define myself as "a failure." Rather, I learn from mistakes and move ahead. (This contributes to incentive and expectancy.)
CREDIBILITY OF PRAISE	<u>Who praises me is important.</u> There are people in my life who I wish would praise me. <u>How I am praised is important:</u> Short/concise praise or very strong, exuberant praise? (This contributes to incentive.)